



Worm charming

★ What do I do?



1. Read the ACTIVITY CARD to familiarise yourself with the activity. You may find worm charming websites helpful too.
2. Check the Resources list – see overleaf. You might need to wet the ground in advance if it has been very dry.
3. Set the scene by discussing the news story with the children.
4. Encourage small teams of children (pairs or threes are best) to decide where and how will they do the worm charming. Some may need extra hints to get started. They could use a worm charming website for ideas.
5. Check that they have thought about making fair comparisons e.g. same area of soil and same amount of time. You could run it as a competition.
6. Remind them about handling the worms gently and keeping the worms and themselves safe.



7. Give out pots of damp soil, a bucket of water and let the worm charming begin!
8. You or the children could take photographs.
9. Encourage the children to look at the worms carefully to find out more about them.
10. Give the children time to share ideas about what happened.
11. Children could record the event through a display of photos or drawings. Alternatively they could create a headline or news story.
12. Ensure that they return the worms safely.
13. There are extra challenges on the ACTIVITY CARD which can be used if there is spare time or if children want to carry on investigating at home and earn a bonus sticker.

★ Handy hints

Resources

- ★ Buckets of water for wetting the ground.
- ★ String, metre rulers, pegs to secure string in squares on the field. You could use large PE hoops or similar instead.
- ★ Containers of damp soil, moss or compost to put the charmed worms in.
- ★ Timers
- ★ Selection of objects for the children to choose from – e.g. garden forks or old kitchen forks to twang, drums or other musical instruments which can be banged. Musical instruments that can be blown, rounders bats or similar to hit the ground, trays or something metallic or wooden to jump or tap dance on etc – feel free to use your imagination.

Safety

- ★ Children must wash their hands with soap and water after handling soil and/or worms. No fingers in mouths or eating or drinking! You may decide to provide disposable gloves. Ensure safe use of equipment e.g. garden forks.
- ★ Keep the patches that they are using well spaced to avoid accidents.
- ★ Avoid areas known to be contaminated with dog faeces or broken glass.
- ★ Handle the worms carefully as they are living creatures. The children must put the worms back in a safe place on top of loose soil so that they can burrow quickly (watch out for birds). Do not leave worms in sunlight or water.

Things to look out for

- ★ Children may be tempted to tug at the worms before they are out of the soil. It could harm the worms and will not help to remove them.

Background information

- ★ A worm's skin is sensitive to vibration.
- ★ Worms move using muscular contractions and bristles on their skin. You can hear the bristles when worms move on paper.
- ★ An internet search using the words 'worm charming' will provide lots of background including the rules of the worm charming competition. There is also a video on the Guinness World Records website.
- ★ Only use water on the ground. Washing up liquid brings up the worms but this is because it irritates their skin and could kill them.

